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STARTS AND STOPS:

Delays they accept, but not the attitude

By Mac Daniel

Bug your boss

If you work at Massachusetts General Hospital, it subsidizes your ride to work if you take mass transit. There's an army of MGH shuttles taking employees between the hospital's campus and commuter stops around the city. Bicycle commuters get to lock their bikes in a safe, locked corral.

If you work for EMC Corp., the company provides three of its employees with an electric car for carpooling throughout the year. Fletcher Allen Health Care in Vermont pays for half of its employees' bus fares and gives \$10 certificates to employees who bike or walk to work at least eight times a month.

What's your employer doing to make your commute easier? How is your employer trying to help reduce the \$1.7 billion cost of commuting in Boston?

These examples are part of the second annual list of New England's Best Workplaces for Commuters, sponsored in part by the US Environmental Protection Agency.

The program is growing, with 30 new companies added to the regional list this year. Organizers hope the recognition will spur other local businesses to become part of the program, which seeks to take 4 million vehicles off the road and thus prevent 22 million tons of carbon dioxide from floating into the air, according to Patricia A. Klavon of the EPA's Innovative Trans-

portation Programs and Partnerships, which is helping organize and promote the project.

To make the list, employers and organizations must:

Offer a "guaranteed ride home" program in which employees who take transit can get home quickly whenever they are needed.

Offer at least one primary commuter benefit, whether it be a transit pass subsidy, cash in lieu of free parking, or a significant telecommuting program.

Offer at least three supporting commuter benefits, including car-pool or van-pool incentives, lockers and showers for bikers or walkers, incentives to live nearer work, or on-site amenities such as day care or dry cleaning.

For more information, check out the websites at www.bwc.gov. Employers can use an interactive worksheet online to calculate their estimated cost savings from signing up for the program.